



*South African Embassy*  
Trafalgar Square  
LONDON WC2N 5DP

29 May 1986

The Rt Hon Malcolm Fraser  
General Olusegun Obasanjo  
Co-Chairmen of the Commonwealth  
Group of Eminent Persons  
Marlborough House  
Pall Mall  
LONDON SW1Y 5HX

Dear Mr Fraser and General Obasanjo

I refer to the 'possible negotiating concept' attached to your letter dated 13 March 1986 and the recent discussions you held with Ministers of the South African Government. There are four major questions which are exercising the mind of the South African Government about the possible negotiating concept presented by your Group.

1. The concept of ending or suspending violence.

It is not the choice of a particular word but the concept of terminating violence as a means of achieving political objectives which is relevant. The South African Government cannot accept the suggestion that violence should be discontinued only for as long as negotiations take place. To use violence or the threat of violence as a bargaining counter is unacceptable to the South African Government.

2. Evidence of commitment to a peaceful solution.

The use of violence for political ends cannot be equated with the responsibility of Government to maintain law and order. The South African Government has committed itself to a constitutional dispensation which guarantees

- the removal of racial discrimination;
- sharing of power up to the highest level of government;
- democratic principles including an independent judicial system and the equality of all under the law;
- private property rights;
- private initiative and effective competition;
- fundamental human rights and civil liberties;
- the protection of minority rights in a manner which would ensure that there will be no political domination by any one community of any other;
- freedom of the press and of expression in general;
- freedom of religion and worship;

and is taking substantial steps to carry out this commitment. It would, therefore, be reasonable to expect evidence that the parties presently involved in violence are in principle willing to commit themselves to a peaceful solution through negotiation and in an environment free of violence. A substantial reduction in violence would help to create the atmosphere in which the additional steps could be taken.

### 3. Intimidation to be abandoned.

It is not only the Government which should permit 'normal political activity' and 'freedom of assembly and discussion'. Other parties need to respect these principles in practice and commit themselves to abandon all forms of intimidation.

### 4. The nature of the negotiations that are envisaged.



The South African Government is prepared to negotiate with South African citizens about a new constitutional dispensation which will provide for power sharing. It is not interested in negotiation about a transfer of power. The South African Government is committed to a negotiated democratic settlement which addresses the legitimate political aspirations of all South Africans. In contrast, others are on record as wanting a diminished democracy in the form of a one-party state with restricted personal and other freedoms.

The South African Government would welcome further discussions which could accommodate the concerns addressed above.

I would like to thank you and your colleagues for the spirit in which we have been able to conduct our discussions.

Yours sincerely

R F BOTHA  
MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

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Trafalgar Square  
LONDON WC2N 5DP

29 May 1986

Prime Minister  
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but it keeps the  
door ajar of the  
— — — — —  
EPG want to keep  
themselves in play.

Mr C D Powell  
Private Secretary to the Prime Minister  
Prime Minister's Office  
10 Downing Street  
LONDON SW1

CDP  
29/5.

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Dear Charles

The Ambassador has this morning delivered the enclosed reply of the South African Government to Marlborough House for transmission to the Co-Chairmen of the Commonwealth Eminent Persons' Group.

We trust that the reply will be seen as positive and providing scope for diplomacy to take its course. In the prevailing climate in South Africa it entailed hard work but perhaps the notion of all parties committing themselves to a non-violent course will help the Group achieve breaking the cycle of violence.

Yours sincerely

L H Evans  
MINISTER

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Frag





File 16  
2087 PC

10 DOWNING STREET  
LONDON SW1A 2AA

*From the Private Secretary*

29 May 1986

I enclose a copy of a letter which I have just received from the South African Embassy, covering the South African Government's reply to the Commonwealth Eminent Persons Group. I do not know whether you have received this from other sources.

CHARLES POWELL

Robert Culshaw, Esq.,  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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